

COURSE SYLLABUS

Divine Encounters: Mapping Your Spiritual Life

Course Lecturer: John Worgul, PhD

Course Description

Welcome to *Divine Encounters: Mapping Your Spiritual Life*, a course designed to prepare you spiritually and emotionally as you begin your biblical and theological studies. You have a desire to know more about the Bible and to develop your relationship with God. Sometimes forward movement can occur most effectively after a backward look.

You will be invited in this course to create your personal life map. In this exercise you will think back on your life, focusing on various segments, and will recall certain relationships, events, influences, and insights that occurred during that time. As you review each life segment, you will begin to see that the hand of God has been at work at every step. Learning to recognize His encounters will equip and enable you to move deeper into your relationship with Him and with others.

Course Objectives

Many Christians desire spiritual transformation in their lives, but are mired in old patterns of thinking or are weighed down by unresolved issues in their lives. We believe that teaching that is transformative will include biblically accurate personal, emotional, and relational understanding. The teaching offered, the life-mapping project, and the interaction with a carefully selected mentor will combine to provide students with significant opportunities for self-reflection, for prayerful recollections, for relational growth, and for spiritual insights.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize specific ways in which God has been involved in your life and experiences.
- Identify ways in which God motivates through divine promises.
- Define *perfection* in the context of spiritual formation.
- Create a life map recounting significant relationships, events, and influences in your life from early childhood to the present.
- Develop a healthy relationship with a mentor who will walk with you in your ongoing spiritual journey.
- Articulate the concept of spiritual formation and state its ultimate goal.

Mentor

We recommend you seek out a mentor to communicate with while you are working through this course. The mentor should be someone who:

- Shares your faith convictions, at least to the degree that the two of you can dialogue from a shared faith in God and in Scripture.
- Has traveled some part of the road ahead of you and can bring helpful experience and knowledge to your relationship. Stanley and Clinton define a mentor as “one who knows or has experienced something” and is able to strengthen your capacity to grow, develop or change. So look for someone who has some God-given resources like wisdom, information, experience, confidence, insight, etc.
- Is accessible. Seek to meet face-to-face once or twice during your time in this course and occasionally through email or by telephone.
- Understands that the relationship is a conversation, one that neither one of you should dominate. The mentor is not “the sage on the stage,” but your “guide alongside.” Choose someone who knows how to listen, but who also knows how to keep you from dumping a stream-of-consciousness outpouring that is not true conversation (dialogue).

Disclaimer

You are about to embark on a journey that is both spiritual and emotional. We at CUGN are equipped to help you focus on your spiritual development, but we are not trained as counselors or psychologists. Therefore, if, as you visit events and issues in your personal history, you encounter emotional and/or relational matters that need to be addressed, we strongly recommend that you seek out a pastor, a counselor, or a psychologist.

If you have a mentor, he/she will be walking with you on this journey. If you sense a need to resolve some life issues, perhaps your mentor can recommend a counselor with whom you can meet. We encourage you not to ignore these issues, but to address them, because often they are roadblocks to spiritual growth.

Course Lecturer



John Worgul, PhD

Education:

- Dropsie College, PhD
- Westminster Theological Seminary, MAR
- Bethel College, Minnesota, BA

Teaching Career:

- Full time and adjunct professor, Seminary of the East (now Bethel Seminary)

Other Career Highlights:

- In addition to biblical studies, Dr. Worgul has a deep interest in spiritual theology and formation.

Course Texts

Note: As with any high-level educational experience, our students are encouraged to be exposed to and reflect on a variety of theological positions so they are well equipped for ministry. Thus, some positions reflected in the reading suggested below will not be in keeping with our ministry position or values. Please see our own statement of faith and ministry values on our ministry website.

Though not required, you may choose to read the textbooks shown below to supplement your learning.

Worgul, John. *Jacob; His Family and Yours*. Westminster, Maryland: John E. Worgul, 2011. (Available only as an ebook)

Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Autobiography: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Story*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998.

If you wish to order the Richard Peace textbook, you may use the CUGN online bookstore available on our website at cugn.org. For the Worgul book, go to Amazon.com for a digital download.

For additional reading and research:Books about Spiritual Autobiography:

Peace, Richard. *Pilgrimage: A Handbook on Christian Growth*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.

Trent, John. *Life Mapping*. Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1994.

Examples of Spiritual Autobiography:

St. Augustine. *Confessions* (Many Editions).

Colson, Charles. *Born Again*. Old Tappan, NJ: Chosen Books/Revel, 1976.

Lewis, C.S. *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Years*. NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955. ISBN: 0-15-687011-8

Merton, Thomas. *The Seven Storey Mountain*. NY: Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich, 1948.

Books on Spiritual Formation:

St. John of the Cross. *The Collected Works*, Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Orilio Rodriguez. Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1991.

The two books in this collection that are most directly relevant for this course are *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, and *Dark Night of the Soul*.

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage you in understanding, processing and applying the information learned in this course to your life. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures to be listened to and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- **Audio-based teaching**
The primary course content will be delivered via audio lectures, including the full transcript of each lecture.
- **Additional Resources**
Lessons may be accompanied by additional readings, images, etc. that you can use to supplement your learning.

Course Requirements

You must complete the course requirements within a 90-day period. Course requirements include:

1. Viewing the Class Time lectures for each lesson, which include:
 - **Lesson Overview:** A brief outline of what the lecturer will cover in the lesson.
 - **Lesson Objectives:** Objectives describe the learning outcomes you should achieve by the end of the lesson.
 - **Lectures:** Approximately 45-minute lectures that can be listened to as many times as needed.
2. Life Map and Project Write-Up: You will develop a Life Map by reflecting upon and writing about your personal history as you recall events, relationships, and influences in various time segments of your life. Upon completion of your Life Map, you will submit a project write-up, of approximately 500 words, describing the project and the benefits you sense you gained from it. More guidance concerning the project can be found by downloading the Life Mapping Project Instructions, found in each lesson's Additional Resources.
3. Completing a final self-assessment form in which you will reflect on the content in the course and evaluate your life in light of what you have learned. The specifics of this assessment are provided in the course materials.

Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded to any student. No numeric or letter grade will be awarded for this course. If you wish to take this course for academic credit, please contact the Admissions office (admissions@cugn.org) to learn more.